

Jose Antonio Navarro House and Store
House #228; Store #232, South Laredo Street
San Antonio, Bexar County
Texas

HABS No. TEX-3148

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORIC AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Western Office, Division of Design and Construction
1000 Geary Street
San Francisco, California

PHOTOGRAPH-DATA BOOK REPORT
HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

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JOSE ANTONIO NAVARRO HOUSE AND STORE

San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas

ADDRESS: House #228; Store #232, South Laredo Street

OWNER: San Antonio Conservation Society

OCCUPANT: Vacant (at this time)

USE: Intended for small meetings, entertainments;
to be open to visitors for a nominal fee when
restoration and furnishing are completed.

HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

Jose Antonio Navarro was one of the signers of the Texas Declaration of Independence. The house and kitchen house are typical examples of the Republic of Texas domestic architecture with sloping roofs, in preference to the wattle and adobe flat roofs typical of contemporary Mexican houses in this area. The store is a unique example of dignified Spanish Colonial architecture, featured by bold stone quoins on all corners.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Jose Antonio Navarro was a native of Texas, born under the Mexican regime. He and Francisco Ruiz were among the prominent citizens of Latin descent to espouse the cause of freedom for Texas. Mr. Navarro and Francisco Ruiz were the only signers of Latin descent of the Texas Declaration of Independence in 1836. In 1841, Jose joined the Santa Fe Expedition, and was captured and imprisoned by Santa Anna. He escaped and returned to San Antonio in 1845.

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Mr. Navarro acquired this property, located on the northeast corner of West Nueva and South Laredo Streets, in 1837, shortly after Texas Independence. It is assumed the main house and kitchen house were built circa 1840 - before his imprisonment. The kitchen house received a 12'-0" addition later to fill requirements for additional space. It is thought the store building was built circa 1850, when the growth of the city made a commercial venture in that area profitable.

Mr. Navarro died in 1871, and willed the property to a daughter, Mrs. Josefa Navarro Tobin who, in turn, sold it to Peter Schiner in 1876. In 1895, the estate of Emma Schiner transferred ownership to Mary E. Brady. In 1932, it passed from Francis T. Brady to Lady P. Brady, who sold the property to the San Antonio Conservation Society, which is now in the process of restoring the buildings. A slight adjustment was made in the north property line in favor of the City-County Jail, which was just being built on adjoining property.

Alterations and Additions: Few changes were made in the physical improvements on the property, except when decay and deterioration required repairs. The original cedar shingle roofs were replaced with standing seam tin roofs on the three structures, probably in the 1850's. The original porch floors have disappeared and some of the original casement windows have been replaced with double hung type. The kitchen house addition has double hung type windows.

The restoration now being carried out by the San Antonio Conservation Society will be authentic in so far as the house and store are concerned. The original grape arbor is to be recreated, the domed well will be preserved, but a part of the kitchen house area will be provided with modern utilitarian facilities, while the exterior will be restored in character. An 8' high native stone wall, some 18" thick, with gaps of square redwood picket fencing interspersed, and a heavy redwood board and batten gate have been constructed to enclose the grounds. There is no evidence that the property was ever enclosed with stone walls heretofore.

REFERENCES

- ALLURING SAN ANTONIO, by Lillie Mae Hagner, pp. 55-56, published by the Naylor Press in 1940.
SAN ANTONIO, by Charles Ramsdell, pp. 165-166, published by the University of Texas Press in 1959.

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Miss Kay Hart, "old S. A. Exhibit", Curator, 521 Villita.
Miss Margarita Navarro, 815 E. Grayson (Ferguson Nursing Home)
San Antonio, Texas, grand-daughter of Jose Antonio Navarro.
Bexar County Deed Records 1837, Vol. D1, p. 151.
Bexar County Probate Records, 1871.
Bexar County Deed Records, 1876, Vol. 1, p. 558.
Bexar County Deed Records, 1895, Vol. R, p. 252, Cause #6628
Office of the District Clerk.
Bexar County Deed Records, 1932, Vol. 1311, p. 148.
Bexar County Deed Records, 1960, Vol. 4485, p. 395.

ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

Architectural Character: The main house is a one-story and attic built on an "L" plan with gabled roof and porch across the front supported by 4" to 5" solid chamfered wood posts and lintels. An L-shaped rear porch of similar construction is located on the inside of the "L" of the house, and the south end has been enclosed. There are two dormer windows in the rear of the main house.

The kitchen house is rectangular with hipped roof and a porch front and rear, and is similar to the main house in construction, but porches are lower and ceilings are exposed.

The store is a two-story rectangular building with hipped roof.

All three buildings are constructed with smooth finished random ashlar native limestone in large blocks; most of the walls are stuccoed.

Condition of Fabric: Good; being restored.

EXTERIOR

Overall Dimensions: House - 40' wide by 48' deep; Store - 24' wide by 20' deep; Kitchen house - 36' wide by 18' deep. Porches are 8', more or less, wide.

Foundations: Continuous native limestone; stone piers under porches.

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Wall Construction: 14" to 16" thick native limestone; mostly stuccoed. All sills, girders, rafters, and lathing for shingles were rough sawn yellow pine.

Porches: Shed type, at lower pitch than main roofs, now supported by solid square chamfered redwood posts and redwood lintels.

Chimneys and Fireplaces: The house has three chimneys and fireplaces with wood mantels. The store has a fireplace with wood mantel on the north end wall. The kitchen house has one masonry fireplace.

Doorways and Doors: House has one-panel double doors; kitchen house has vertical board and batten doors. Store has diagonal T&G board double doors with fixed transoms (may have been full height doors originally).

Windows: Originally 10/10 and 8/8 light casement, except 6/6 light double hung in new part of kitchen house. Windows in store were guarded with solid built-up out-opening shutters and with removable louvred shutters in houses. Frames are heavy cypress with splayed jambs, and beaded exterior trim.

Roof: Main roof over houses approximately 7 in 12 pitch, breaking to 6 in 12 over porches; roof over store breaks from about a 6 in 12 pitch to a 5 in 12 pitch at eaves. (Standing seam metal roofs have been replaced with cedar shakes in the restoration work.) All roofs are hipped except over main house.

Cornice: Cornice on store is boxed in and projects about 8". Cornices, on houses only, project two to three inches and are enclosed with verge boards and mouldings. Lintels at porches serve as cornices.

INTERIOR

Floor Plan: House is one-story with unfinished attic; one large and one small room across the front, and two rooms in east wing form the "L". The servant's house, originally contained two rooms, but the later 12' addition, adding a third room, has been sub-divided for kitchen and toilet facilities. The store consists of one large room on the first floor and one room on second floor.

The ceilings in the main house range from 12' to 13'. The ceilings in the store are 11' high on first floor and 8'-8" at the high point on the second floor. The second floor of the store is reached by steep interior and exterior stairs.

Flooring: Originally 1" x 6" yellow pine; replaced with random width T&G white pine.

Wall and Ceiling Finish: Main house has lime plaster walls, flat wood ceilings with exposed beaded joists. The kitchen house has lime plaster walls and exposed roof rafters and shingle lath for ceiling. Store has lime plaster walls, first floor ceiling exposed joists; second floor ceiling was originally canvas, now changed to tray-type wood ceiling.

Doors: Interior doors in main house are single panel double doors, each half 1'-6" wide; in kitchen house, doors are built up vertical board and batten; in store, doors are built up diagonal T&G Boards.

Trim: In house, 1x4 single beaded; hang rail is 1x5, about 6' above floor; kitchen house - no base; in store 1x4 plain trim.

Partitions: Interior partitions in houses are natural stone or wood stud and wood lath, plastered both sides.

Hardware: Rim lock with brown porcelain knobs.

Lighting: Now wired for electricity.

OUTBUILDINGS

The kitchen house is the only outbuilding structure ever known to have existed. The vestiges of the original well remain in a domed stone super-structure in the rear yard.

SITE

The store building is located on the northeast corner of Nueva and Laredo Streets at the property line. The house is located about 18'

north with the porch front at property line. The kitchen house is located 40' east of the store, and its south end is located at the Nueva Street property line. Fronts of all buildings face west.

Plans for reconstructing the grape arbor, walks and other landscaping are being prepared. The property has been enclosed with an 8' high native stone wall for security and privacy.

Prepared by,

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